family is to have any security in either this life or the next, they must have children who are obliged to them as heirs and descendants. As a result, male children have an absolute value, their worth to their family being something which cannot be estimated in monetary terms. A family may be forced by extreme poverty to sell one or more of their children in order to support themselves and their remaining children, but they would never sell a male as a means of adding to their material possessions. To trade a male child for property would simply not make sense to most people in Hsiachichou, for it is with reference to sons and grandsons that property acquires much of its value. As one of our village informants put it when we asked him why so few people sell their sons, "There is no point in having money or land if you don't have children. Who will inherit these things if you have no sons or grandsons? And who will you have to carry on your family name when you are dead?"

Of 110 male children born into Hsiachichou before 1930 only 8 (7 percent) were sold as <u>biēng-liāng-kiá</u>:, and in every case the family selling the child was poor by local standards. We know that not one of these families owned land other than their own house site, and so far as their neighbors remember none had any income from a business or trade. Four of the eight children sold were sons of a village woman by the name of Ong Chun-a whose family was probably the poorest in the village. According to Ong Chun-a, "We had to sell those children. We were starving then, and they offered a very good price. Besides, I had to sell my milk to make money." It is interesting to note that

182 children and thought they could use her help with household chores. If
*597 they could see that they would not have to resort to a matrilocal
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*562 marriage, and if they also had as much female labor as they could use and afford, they decided to give the child away as a means of conserving family resources. Personal attachment and other particularistic considerations apparently played little part in these decisions. This was probably due at least in part to the fact that it was the child's grandparents rather than her parents who made the decisions. They were naturally not as personally involved with the child as her own parents and were able to make the decision which was most consistent with the family's needs and goals. A second and probably more important reason was the press of circumstances and the tremendous importance of genealogical continuity. A family could not afford to give away a female child [735] if they had no sons because they could not risk dying without descendants, and yet most families were so poor that they could not afford to keep a child who did not have any real value to the family. A family was so constrained by their goals and by their limited means that they must of necessity think of female children as counters of varying value. The head of a family might feel that girls were something to lose money on and prefer to give them away in adoption, but if he did not have any other grandchildren he could not risk such a decision. On the other hand, a parent might become very attached to a second or third born daughter and want to keep her, but if he already had several children he could not afford to do so without straining the family's finances. There was little room for personal or idiosyncratic considerations, and

*597 556 give their daughters out as sīm-pûà. The villagers themselves assume that such a correlation exists, but the limited data that we have do not seem to corroborate their assumption. The few cases for which we have all of the necessary information include several families who gave one daughter out as a sīm-pûà and sold another as a lông-lù. The choice between the two forms of adoption does not seem to have been a very significant one for these families, and so perhaps here again relative wealth is only an important factor when one compares the very wealthy and the very poor.

*597 *562 *121 We are thus able to draw a relatively simple picture of decisions concerning adoption in the years before 1930. Whether or not any particular child was given away in adoption depended primarily upon the child's sex and the composition of the family in which he was born. The prime concern of any family in making decisions about their membership was to have descendants who could care for the adult members of the family in their old age and provide for the continuation of the family into the next generation. A child who was born into an as yet childless family was thus almost never given away in adoption. Of 18 males and 14 females born into childless families only 1 (5 percent) of the males and 4 (22 percent) of the females were given out in adoption. But while every family was very much concerned to have heirs and descendants, all but a very few families were so poor that they could not easily afford to raise all of their offspring. The general preference for patrilineal descent and patrilocal marriage also created among all families a tendency to value their male children much more than their female children.

[735] [611] [582] [842]

589 return for his foster sister's having been allowed to marry out of the family. While this was probably not the reason he remained single, it [158] did at least make it possible. In another case a man was apparently prevented from marrying by a mental illness. Although he died a number of years before we came to the village, we were told that he was slow of mind "and stood shaking his head when you talked to him." [784] This is said to have been his punishment for making fun of the god Chi [776] Yeh who is always represented in festival parades as a short black- [828] faced deity with the habit of continually wagging his head to and fro. The other two cases involved two brothers whose departure from the normal pattern was almost certainly due to poverty. Although this family has lived in Hsiachichou for a number of generations they have [735] never owned any farm land or even a house site. One of their former [87] neighbors told us that even though he was first in his class the present head of the household was forced to quit school after the fourth grade "because the family couldn't afford the few dollars a year for [54] tuition and books." Although the brothers of these two men did manage to marry, it is significant that one of them had to marry matrilocally.

Of a total of 121 women who grew up in Hsiachichou at least 9 (7 percent) and perhaps 11 (9 percent) did not marry by the time they 588 were thirty years of age. One of the doubtful cases involves a woman by the name of Tan A-giok who was in her mid-forties in 1960. According to several of our informants, Tan A-giok's parents arranged for a man to marry into her family, but he didn't stay "because her mother was always saying things to him. He just couldn't stand it, and so he left

585 589 promised to do. "His own children are very capable and have good jobs, and so if my children had someone to teach them they would do well too. They come from good stock." A frank intelligent woman with a good deal of perspective, Ng Cng-sueq was probably telling the truth when she said that she does not really care what happens to her now. "If I don't eat well, it doesn't matter. I don't care about myself. I' just want my children to do well, and then I will have someone to support me in my old age."

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548 589 The most common cause of a woman's not marrying is her parents' desire to arrange a matrilocal marriage and their inability to do so. When a family has only daughters of marriageable age and cannot find a man willing to make a matrilocal marriage, they often have no choice but to send one of their daughters to work as a prostitute, for this is the only way in which a woman can make a substantial contribution to her family's income. We know of at least three cases in which such a situation was the cause of a woman's remaining unmarried, and this may also have been the case with Ng Cng-sueq. Since her parents' only children are two adopted daughters, they undoubtedly attempted to arrange a matrilocal marriage for at least one of them. That they were unable to do so is not very surprising, however, as the family is so poor that no man would see this as a very attractive match. In order to provide for their most basic needs one of the daughters had to go out to work as a prostitute.

*584 *597 589 The only other unmarried woman about whom we have any reliable information is that of Ong Ti-sai. Born into a village family with a

511 qualify any such remarks with a statement that everyone
621 in Sanlei is poor. The families which are usually con-
565 sidered poor and most clearly set apart from the general village population are those which do not have a vigorous adult member.

• 735 There is considerable cooperation in supporting the seven poorest families of the sixty-six families in the village. As previously described, poor people are often guests at the pai pai in their neighbor's homes. There are also reductions in the prices they pay for goods and services as illustrated by the previously discussed case of the barber and free haircuts. Additionally, both village stores charge less than the normal price and often put items on a charge account with no expectation they will ever be paid. The most important aid however is with regard to food and wood for poor families are permitted to grow sweet potatoes on little plots of land they do not own but which otherwise might be left unused. If no one in the family is capable of working the plot, farmers who pass by will regularly contribute little increments of
[578] labor to manage the plots. The poor are also permitted to help themselves to certain products, particularly the poor grade vegetables and gleanings and wood although the theft of wood and vegetables by anyone who was not poor was probably the chief source of conflict in the village.

735 558 These practices are not obvious to the casual observer for much is done to preserve "face." Since anyone who begged would necessarily lose face, there must be an avoidance of either asking for items or of offering items in a manner which suggest the receiver has need of them. Clothes are given to someone for example, because they no longer fit. Someone announces in a group that some of his vegetables are going rotten in the field because there is no one available to pick them. However, careful watch is kept on those who help themselves and since everyone's financial condition is well known, few people other than the poor are permitted to take advantage of the situation. Those who benefit most from these customs are usually widows or old men who have never married.

511 621 In summary, there does not appear to be anyone in an extremely poor position economically in Sanlei village. Although some people are much better off than others, the differences in clothing, daily diet, and style of life are not great and no one ever appears to go hungry. There is some nostalgia for the period of the Japanese occupation when prices were said to be much lower but in fact, it appears that everyone is eating better and richer foods than ever before in history for although prices are higher, so is income. The system of pai pai with many invited guests helps the poor to share the prosperity as does the reduction in the cost of goods and services, all leveling

511 factors in the distribution of community resources so that
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everyone shares in the prosperity. Finally, the continued
development of land and the industrialization nearby all
offer so many job opportunities that just about anyone
that wants to work can earn a living.